Colchester CSDE Special Education Site Visit

Summary of Findings to BOE: 9/10/24

Overview of CSDE Integrated Monitoring Process

- ★ CSDE Integrated Monitoring Process for school districts
- ★ Audit and Site Visit from team from CSDE and SERC in February, 2024
- ★ Key components included:
  - Desk Audit
  - Unannounced on-site visit to all 4 schools
  - Classroom observations
  - Staff interviews
  - Parent interviews (collected by CPAC)

Highlights of Component 1: desk audit

- ★ IEP documents for a random selection of Colchester students receiving special education services were reviewed.
- ★ Commendations included:
  - Fidelity of provision of IEP services were successfully verified for 100% of selected students
  - Key timelines for annual and triennial reviews were met, in accordance with state requirements
  - Prior Written Notice (PWN) documents: completed correctly, with overall quality of narrative information receiving the highest possible rating
- ★ Recommendations for continued department focus were provided (see final slide)

Highlights of component 2: school/classroom visits

- ★ Pride of school staff and administrative team in our schools evident to team
- ★ Use of best practices in specialized program classrooms highlighted
- ★ Paraeducators commended for positive student interactions and appropriate use of prompting
- ★ Collaboration of special education teachers and general education teachers noted
- ★ Students with IEPs meaningfully integrated into classroom instruction

Highlights of component 3: staff interviews

- ★ Paraeducators, teachers, and administrators were interviewed.
- ★ Themes identified:
  - Staff feel supported by administration and pleased with vision of the school district
  - Paraeducators feel valued by their teaching colleagues
  - Staff feel they have adequate resources to perform their duties
  - Valuable feedback on future professional development and training topics were shared
  - Pupil Services staff spoke of challenges of their multi-faceted roles
  - Importance of attracting and retaining quality educators was noted. (All certified special education staffing positions were filled in July 2024. We remain fully staffed at present.)

Highlights of component 4: Parent Interviews

- ★ CSDE utilized support from CPAC to conduct parent interviews: 16 families participated of 192 who were contacted
- ★ Highlights of feedback:
  - 100% say staff members respond to parent contact in a timely manner
  - 92% of parents say communication with school regarding special education services for their child is effective
  - 85% report being asked for their input during PPT meetings
  - 83% say their child consistently receives the supports/services in their IEP
  - 75% are satisfied with their child's supports/services overall
  - 46% feel that the information/evaluative data presented in PPT meetings is easy to understand

Key takeaways/next steps:

- ★ Department focus for school year is meaningful access for families in the PPT and special education process
  - Streamlined & consistent anchor documents for meetings
  - Provision of documents/opportunity to ask questions in advance of meeting to come prepared for meaningful participation
  - Parent outreach/collaboration/support
- ★ Professional development for staff
  - In accordance with staff feedback: IEP development, specialized reading methodology/instruction, student engagement, positive behavioral supports
- ★ Staff appreciation, support and wellness